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Application No. 09/724,908

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented):   A messaging system comprising:

a web server computer; and

a video game system for executing a video game program for a video game, the video game program being embodied on a storage device replaceably connectable by a user to the video game system and comprising program instructions for both the video game and for a messaging service client, whereby the messaging service client is activated by connecting the storage device to the video game system and executing the video game program embodied thereon, the activated messaging service client establishing a connection between the video game system and said web server computer via the Internet and sending status data from the video game system to said web server computer that is indicative of the video game program being executed by the video game system,

wherein said web server computer generates a session file when the video game system connects thereto, the session file comprising the status data sent from the video game system and status data indicative of video game programs being executed by video game systems of each of one or more buddies identified on a buddy list previously defined by the user,

wherein the status data of the one or more buddies on the buddy list is accessible to the user even if the video game system of the user and the video game systems of the one or more buddies are executing video game programs for playing different games.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented):   The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data for each buddy further indicates whether that buddy is online and able to send/receive messages.

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Claim 3 (Previously Presented):   The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data for each buddy further indicates whether that buddy is online, but not able to send/receive messages.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented):   The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data for each buddy further indicates whether that buddy is online and able to send, but not receive, messages.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented):   The system according to claim 1, wherein the web server computer stores a user profile for the user.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended):   The system according to claim 5, wherein the user can configure the accessibility of the user's profile to others.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended):   The system according to claim 5, wherein a system administrator can configure the accessibility of the user's profile to others.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented):   The system according to claim 1, wherein said web server computer is responsive to a user-supplied request for communicating to the user an identification of all buddy lists on which the user appears.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented):   The system according to claim 8, wherein said web server computer is further responsive to a user-supplied request for deleting the user's name from one or more other user's buddy lists.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended):   A portable memory medium replaceably connectable to a video game system for playing a video game, the portable memory medium having stored thereon a video game program for the video game that is executable by processing circuitry of the video game system, the video game program comprising program instructions for both the video game and for a messaging service

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client, whereby the messaging service client is activated by connecting the portable memory medium to the video game system and executing the video game program embodied thereon, wherein the messaging service client is for a messaging service for communicating messages to other messaging service users via a message server and the activated messaging service client establishes a connection between the video game system and the message server via a communication network.

Claim 11 (Original): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the portable memory medium comprises an optical memory medium.

Claim 12 (Original): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the portable memory medium comprises a magnetic memory medium.

Claim 13 (Original): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the portable memory medium comprises a semiconductor memory medium.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the video game system is a hand-held game system, and the portable memory medium is adapted for replaceable connection to the hand-held game system.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the video game system is a video game console connected to a television, and the portable memory medium is adapted for replaceable connection to the video game console.

Claim 16 (Original): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the communication network is the Internet.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service client includes a user registration routine for registering a user as a user of the messaging service.

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Claim 18 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service client includes a user profile routine for creating a user profile.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 18, wherein the messaging service client further includes a preferences routine for setting access limitations to the user profile.

Claim 20 (Original):   The portable memory medium according to claim 18, wherein the user profile includes a customized image comprising user-selected features.

Claim 21 (Original):   The portable memory medium according to claim 18, wherein the user profile includes a digital image of the user.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service client includes a buddy list routine for creating a user buddy list.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 22, wherein the messaging service client further includes a preferences routine for setting a buddy sign-on alert to provide an alert to the user when a buddy on the buddy list signs onto the messaging service.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 22, wherein the messaging service client further includes a preferences routine for setting a buddy sign-off alert to provide an alert to the user when a buddy on the buddy list signs off the messaging service.

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Claim 25 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service client includes a preferences routine for setting a message alert to provide an alert to a user when a message is received.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service client includes an auto-start routine for automatically logging a user into the messaging service.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented):   The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service client includes a start routine for logging a user into the messaging service as being engaged in a particular activity on the video game system.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended):   A video game system, comprising:
processing circuitry;
a communication circuit that, in use, connects the video game system to a communication network; and
a connector that, in use, connects to a replaceably connectable portable storage medium storing a video game program for a video game that is executable by the processing circuitry, the video game program comprising program instructions both for the video game and for a messaging service client, whereby the messaging service client is activated by connecting the storage device to the video game system and executing the video game program embodied thereon, wherein the messaging service client is for a messaging service for communicating messages to other messaging service users via a message server and the activated messaging service client establishes a connection between the video game system and the messaging server via the communication network.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented):   A video game machine comprising:
a video game program executing system for executing a video game program embodied on a replaceably connectable storage device, the video game program

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comprising program instructions for both a video game and for a messaging service client, whereby the messaging service client is activated by connecting the storage device to the video game machine and executing the video game program embodied thereon; and

a communication circuit for connecting over a communication network to a messaging server,

wherein the messaging service client enables messaging with other users connected to the messaging server and the activated messaging service client establishes a connection between the video game machine and the messaging server via the communication network.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the other users are selected from a user-definable list.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client provides status data of the other users connected to the messaging server.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the video game program executing system is embodied in a hand-held housing.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the video game program executing system is embodied in a console.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a user registration routine for registering a user as a user of the messaging service.

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Claim 35 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a user profile routine for creating a user profile.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a user preferences routine for setting user preferences.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises an auto-start routine for automatically logging the user into the messaging service.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented):   The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a start routine for logging the user into the messaging service as being engaged in a particular activity on the video game system.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented):   A messaging service client incorporated into a video game program for a video game that is embodied on a storage device that is replaceably connectable to a video game machine for executing the video game program, the messaging service client being activated by executing the video game program and comprising instructions for:

contacting a messaging server over a communication network;

sending identities of the video game and a player playing the video game to the contacted messaging server;

receiving buddy-list data from the contacted messaging server buddy list data for one or more players on a buddy list previously defined by the player, the buddy list data comprising identities of other players and games that the other players are playing; and

generating a display based on the received buddy list data, the display comprising the identities of one or more of the other players and the games the one or more other players are playing.

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Claim 40 (Previously Presented):   The messaging service client according to claim 39, comprising further instructions for:

receiving a message from another player while the player is playing the video game.

Claim 41 (Previously Presented):   The messaging service client according to claim 40, comprising further instructions for:

providing a prompt to the player that the message has been received.

Claim 42 (Previously Presented):   The messaging service client according to claim 41, comprising further instructions for:

suspending playing of the video game and displaying the message in response to one or more player inputs.

Claim 43 (Previously Presented):   The messaging service client according to claim 39, comprising further instructions for:

receiving e-mail notifications from the player's e-mail service indicating that e-mail messages have been received.

Claim 44 (Previously Presented):   The messaging service client according to claim 39, comprising further instructions for:

receiving and storing player preference data that is referenced when the messaging service client is executed.

Claim 45 (Currently Amended):   The messaging service client according to claim 39, comprising further instructions for:

generating the [[a]] buddy list in response to inputs from the player.

Claim 46 (Previously Presented):   The messaging service client according to claim 39, wherein the storage medium comprises a portable storage medium.

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Claim 47 (Canceled).

Claim 48 (Currently Amended):   A server process for a game network server
embodied on a storage device and comprising instructions executable by a server
processing system for:

receiving identifiers of players and video games played by the players from a
plurality of game machines executing respective video game programs each embodied on
a replaceably connectable storage device, the respective video game programs each
comprising program instructions both for a video game and for a messaging service
client, whereby the messaging client is activated by connecting the storage device to a
corresponding game machine and executing the video game program;

logging the players onto the game network server;

for each of one or more of the logged-on players, determining whether that
logged-on player has a previously-defined buddy list of other players and, if so,
determining which players on the buddy list are currently logged-in and what games
those players are playing; and

sending to each of the one or more logged-on players, the identities of the players
on the buddy list that are currently logged-in and the games that those players are
playing..

Claim 49 (Previously Presented):   The server process according to claim 48,
comprising further instructions executable by the server processing system for:

supplying messages received from one logged-in player to another logged-in
player.

Claim 50 (Previously Presented):   The server process according to claim 48,
comprising further instructions executable by the server processing system for:

setting up text-based chat sessions between two or more logged-in players.

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Claim 51 (Previously Presented):   The server process according to claim 48, comprising further instructions executable by the server processing system for:

setting up voice-based chat sessions between two or more logged-in players.

Claim 52 (Canceled).

Claim 53 (New):   A game network server configured to execute the server process according to claim 48.

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